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September 1995

Cross-Department Teams Created

by Larry Wiedey

On Wednesday, August 30th, over 50 State Fund employees gathered for a very intensive cross-department team training session.

The training focused on using a team approach to help improve risk retention and attract new business.

Dan Glenny helps Mike Knecht, Jay Phillips, Sam Heigh and Mike McGrorty work through a case study.

The topics discussed at the training session include:

- large account business process
- why teams work
- servicing needs of large accounts
- communication needs of large accounts
- team member responsibilities
- team responsibilities
- evaluating large accounts
- value-added selling
- adverse trends and risk improvement

Over the last two years, the State Fund has lost over $38,000,000 in premium on accounts in excess of $50,000. With our renewed desire and commitment to work with customers and meet their needs we hope to win back this business.

The purpose for creating cross-department teams is to begin a process to identify customer needs and deliver value-added services to policyholders.

Five teams were formed and given specific assignments. One team was assigned to work primarily with State Government. The four other teams have a geographic region to cover.

Vicki Hirschi, Bill Beck and Dennis Small diligently take notes.

The teams are meeting on a regular basis to discuss and plan activities. These activities will help improve large account retention and ultimately help us solicit and se-

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Customer Commentary

Some comments from the Claimant Questionnaire...

Bernard M. wrote, "More info on rights, resources, or options or where to find info. Took me awhile to figure out things and still not sure. Thanks—P.S. my claim adjuster gave me considerable information.

Carol P. noted, "You did a very good job. Thank you very much."

Wilfred W. wrote, "Turn off answer machines, answer phones. Return calls promptly."

National Fire Prevention Week

by Claudia Thomas

Each year during the first week of October National Fire Prevention Week is recognized throughout the country.

The need for national recognition and education commemorates the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire which took place on October 8, 1871, killing 300 people.

What many people don't remember is only 250 miles away in Peshtigo, Wisconsin, a fire took 1,200 lives on that same day.

This is also a good time to check and change smoke detector batteries.

Today, thanks to modern firefighting techniques and education, many tragedies are prevented. Now people all over the country are taught the importance of home fire drills, designating a safe meeting place, calling 911 in an emergency, to stop-drop-roll if clothing is on fire, to crawl in smoke, as well as other life-saving procedures.

Many of you with children will notice them coming home with bundles of materials on fire prevention—please take time to review these materials and practice not only home fire drills, but the other prevention procedures mentioned.

Nothing would make a firefighter happier than to never have to fight another fire...but more realistically...through educational efforts more and more lives will be saved.

So be safe—practice fire safety every day!

Anyone wanting further information on prevention tips can contact their local fire department or call Claudia Thomas at 6445.

Published monthly for and by the employees of the Montana State Fund.

The Trainer Knocks!

Opportunities for Personal and Professional Development

In late August, Larry Wiedey, Jim McCluskey, and Azmi Salaymeh kicked off the first training for the new cross-department teams. The day-long training session brought together over 50 members of those three departments plus others to learn the concepts and procedures for these new teams to target customer service to our largest policy holders—and, over time, to entice new, large accounts to insure with us. Larry, Jim, and Azmi put a great deal of effort into the class. Congratulations to those who participated. Another change, another challenge!

We are also well into classes supporting our Performance Planning and Review Process. Training on this one will continue throughout the next year—targeting each phase of the program as it is needed. Thanks to all for your participation and patience with this complex subject. Another change, another challenge!

Change affects us all—and in many different ways. Let each of us be mindful of how full the other's plate is as we continue this accelerated entry into a new and exciting culture. Too many times and in too many places in our society these days, it seems that civility has suffered. Let us all be professional and kind to one another.

See you in class!! ———

Training Opportunities:

State Professional Development Center:
Effective Communications—September 26
Media Relations—October 18 & 19
All Kidding Aside: Preventing Harassment—October 26 (1/2 day)
Approaching Supervision—October 31

Helena College of Technology:
(State contract computer training)
Lotus for Windows—September 26 &27
Lotus for Windows—October 3 & 4
Lotus Macros for Windows—October 5
Intro to WordPerfect 6.1—October 17 &18
Intro to Windows—October 30
Intermediate Windows—October 31

The Computer School:
Intermediate WordPerfect for Windows—October 3-5 & 10-11, 5-7pm
Lotus for Windows Intro—October 10-13, 9am - noon
Beginning WordPerfect for Windows—October 23-25, 9am - noon

Got an idea for training? Send your ideas, needs, suggestions to Frank via ZIP! or phone (9333) or leave a note!

Human Resources

Personnel changes as of September 22.

Promotions/Transfers

Kevin Bartsch, Claim Supervisor
Melodie Phalp, Claim to Admin/Finance

New Hires

Enid Christenson, Admin/Finance
Rick Henson, Claim

Departures

Jacob Bristow, Claim
Jeff Holm, MIS

Mount Helena Run

The Mount Helena Run is scheduled for Saturday, September 23.

The run/walk is nearly 6 miles up, around and down Mount Helena.

The starting point will be downtown on the walking mall near the Parrot at 9 a.m.

Please call Montana Power for a registration form.

Did You Know...

In Australia it is a Federal Law that companies must invest 1/2-1% of their gross revenue in employee training—that's investing in employees!

BIS Update

It's not just the kids who are back in school—State Fund employees are marching with sack lunches and notebooks in hand to BIS (Benefit Information System) training.

Room 302 has been transformed into the BIS Training Room and many employees are BIS (back in school).

The BIS Core Team; Wayne Dillavou, Sherrie Chenovick, Shari Huth, Kathy Oliver, Cris McCoy, and John Thomas are conducting the training.

The entire Claim Department and selected staff from other departments will attend the training.

Although implementation has been delayed until January, the Core Team is still very excited about the BIS project. Core Team Member Wayne Dillavou said, "BIS will be an incredible tool, once it is up and running."

Claim staff and others have begun orientation and are "chomping at the bit" to complete the training.

New Papa in Programming

Bob and Diana Janicek are the proud new parents of a baby girl. Kelby Karen was born at noon on Tuesday, September 12. She weighed in at 8 lbs., 13 oz.

Congratulations Bob and Diana!

Kudos Korner

Kudos to Dwight Bernard

—working hard in Imaging Unit!

Dwight Bernard has been working very diligently to get the Imaging Unit staff and equipment up and running for BIS.

Kudos to Marv, Fred, Zach, Jim G., and Blaine, et al

—first floor looks great!

These guys worked very hard, under a tight timeline to get the Claim Department reorganized—the new setup provides a much more efficient work area.

Unsafe Office Exhibit a Success

by Jennifer VanLuchene

The Loss Control Department was the proud sponsor of a display booth and a mock "Unsafe Office" Exhibit at the recent State Safety Expo.

Jennifer VanLuchene, Loss Control Consultant for state agencies and new Senior Loss Control Specialist, Phil Rowe, developed the Unsafe Office Exhibit and other members of the Loss Control Department were on hand to help out and answer questions about safe work practices.

Participants in the Unsafe Office Exhibit were allowed three minutes to view and assess the hazards in the mock office. Once outside the office, they wrote down the hazards they saw in the office. There were a total of 40 hazards and those who identified the most hazards were awarded prizes.

Some of the more noticeable hazards were an improperly designed work station, paper between a coffee maker and a portable heater, broken file cabinets, and sharp objects in a drawer and pencil holder.

Some of the harder to find hazards included an empty fire extinguisher, too many electrical cords in an outlet, damaged electrical cords, pins on the floor, and many more.

The contest, sponsored by the Wyoming/Montana Safety Council, was a rousing success.

The first place winner, identifying 28, hazards was Martin Baumann of the Legislative Services Division. Martin won $325 of tuition reimbursement for safety training sponsored by the Wyoming/Montana Safety Council.

Second place honors went to Joe Mazurek, Attorney General, who identified 26 hazards entitling his office to $225 of training by the Council.

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1995 State Employees' Combined Campaign

by Shawn Bubb

Let the fun begin! This year's United Way SEC campaign is scheduled to begin on October 2nd and run through November 13th.

In 1994, this event raised over $120,000 for local, state, and national nonprofit organizations and charities. The State Fund raised $3,600 and had a lot of fun in the process.

The '95 campaign will benefit over 275 such organizations—your pledges and donations may be designated for use by one or more of the participating organizations.

In addition to the events planned for the State Fund during the '95 campaign, all state employees who pledge just $1 a month or $12 in total could win the Grand Prize—a trip for two to Hawaii. The trip includes round trip airfare and lodging at a luxurious condominium.

There will also be a drawing for two 1st Place Prizes—$100 gift certificates at Pier One Imports.

The drawings for the Grand Prize and the two 1st Place Prizes will be held on December 11th. Weekly drawings will also be held for turkeys, hams, and restaurant gift certificates. To be part of these weekly drawings no donation is required—just complete the pledge card and turn it in.

This year's SECC committee includes:

Dan Whyte-Legal
Wes Winden-Human Resources
Barb Sauter-MIS
Jean Ketchel-LC/PA
Steven Ashmore-Claim
Mike McGrorty-Claim
Mary Simpson-Underwriting
Danielle Vincent-Admin/Finance

I am the agency coordinator this year and Debbie Svaldi is our assistant coordinator.

I will be sending out more information about pledge cards and State Fund events for this year's campaign very soon...until then start working on your tan—you could be going to Hawaii!!

Test Yourself

How Good a Coach Are You?

Part of being an effective manager is coaching your employees to achieve excellence—especially in customer service, where the bottom line is directly involved.

Take the following quiz to find those areas where you might improve your coaching skills:

1. When an employee seems to lack confidence in performing a particular task, you (A) Tell the person that he or she should know how to do it by now. (B) Encourage the employee to express his or her concerns and then empathize with the employee's feelings. (C) Remove that task from the person.

2. Answer "true" or "false": Since employees are paid to do the job correctly, you need to provide feedback only when they do something wrong.

3. If employees seem to be performing below par, you should (A) Probe for information to uncover the cause. (B) Tell them to get over it. (C) Think about their working conditions and base your solutions on what you know about the situation.

Answers: 1.B. Good coaches maintain employees' self-esteem and allow them to vent their frustrations. 2.False. Employees also need positive feedback so they know they're meeting your standards. 3.A. You need to be aware of everything going on in your department and should resolve issues before they affect service quality. Never assume you know what is happening.

Source: Copyrighted material reprinted with permission of *Customer Service Manager's Letter* and Bureau of Business Practice, 24 Rope Ferry Road, Waterford, CT.

Traits of Successful People

The most consistently successful people have many of the traits listed below, according to Connie Gruen, president of a recruitment firm:

- They are realistic about their value to their organization and understand how their efforts affect the bottom line.
- They develop reputations as people who can be counted on consistently to do what they've committed to do.
- Their organizations and managers are eager to "showcase" them. They are effective company ambassadors, and, in every business setting, have good instincts about what to talk about, and what not to.
- They avoid grousing with others in the organization and they maintain an upbeat attitude through business ups and downs. When they point out a problem, they suggest some potential solutions.
- They have excellent writing skills that shine in memos, reports, and newsletters. They take on chores, such as public speaking engagements, running seminars, etc., that others don't want.
- They suggest and take charge of innovative programs, finding a more efficient and cost-effective approach to a problem or process.

Source; Connie M. Gruen, President, Resource National, Brewster, NY.

Friends...

They cherish
each other's
hopes

They are
kind to
each other's
dreams.

—Thoreau

Blackaby Passes Bar

Congratulations to Dean Blackaby—he has passed the Montana Bar Exam.

Dean is a claim examiner in the AC Unit and has worked for the State Fund for nearly a year.

Dean and his family moved to Montana from Missouri, where he attended law school.

Dean will be admitted to the Montana Bar Association on September 25.

Congratulations Dean—what a great accomplishment!

MIS Reminders

Computer users, please...

DO NOT make program changes—call MIS for help, if you have problems.

DO NOT install software without prior authorization from MIS.

DO NOT use disks from any outside source until they have been checked by MIS for viruses.

Thank you!

Columbus Day

Christopher Columbus, it is claimed by many, is the explorer who discovered America. Such a claim does not take into account that native Americans (called Indians by Columbus, who thought he had reached India, not America) had lived in what is now North and South America for hundreds of years before his arrival.

Over the years, evidence has been found to suggest that others had also visited our shores before Columbus—ancient Phoenicians, Irish monks, Vikings, for example. The list is long.

Whatever is said, it is certainly true that the news of Christopher Columbus' voyage excited all of Europe and inspired centuries of voyages and travels which opened the western hemisphere to the rest of the world.

Columbus was born in northern Italy in 1451. As a child he dreamed of travel. He grew up to become a navigator and mapmaker. Although many at that time believed the world was flat, Columbus believed it was round and that the fabled riches of the East could be reached by sailing west from Europe.

For years, Columbus tried all over Europe to find a sponsor for his voyage. Finally, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain agreed to back him.

So it was on August 3, 1492 that Columbus set sail from Spain with 120 men and three small ships—the *Nina*, the *Pinta*, and the *Santa Maria*. After many storms and other hardships, land was sighted on October 12.

Columbus Day was first celebrated on October 12, 1792 in New York City—the 300th anniversary of the sighting of land.

In 1892, there was a national celebration, and by the beginning of our century, Columbus Day was celebrated throughout the North and South America with banquets and parades.

Columbus Day is now observed each year on the second Monday of October and is recognized as a State Fund holiday.

Profiles

Policy Services—Unit 2

Connie Ferriter is an Underwriting Tech and has been in her current position for 4 1/2 years.

Her responsibilities include issuing workers' compensation policies, classifying claims with the appropriate class codes, and assisting in other areas of the Unit as needed.

Connie has worked for the State Fund for almost ten years. She has held previous positions as a Program Assistant II in Underwriting, and Accounting Tech in Administration and Finance, and an Administration Clerk.

Connie has been married for 22 years and has three children, Tara, 21, Kelly, 20, and Brady, 6. The family enjoys camping and the "great outdoors".

Kathy Frandsen has been on vacation, so we will catch up with her later.

Kristy Gilbert is the Underwriting Services Supervisor for Units 2 and 4 and has been with the State Fund for 18 years.

Kristy has been in her current position for 10 years and her responsibilities include supervising the Unit functions for the Southeast and Southwest sections of the Montana, as well as all out-of-state employers.

Kristy says she has held, at one time or another, most all of the jobs in the Policy Services/Underwriting Department.

She enjoys the outdoors, aerobics, and reading.

Becky Rabey is an Underwriting Assistant and has been in her current position for 1 1/2 years.

Previous positions Becky has held include Cashier in Accounting, Administrative Clerk in Policy Services, and File Clerk in the Claim Department.

She has a 4-year old daughter and a 1 1/2-year old son.

Chantal VanDaele has been an Underwriting Tech Assistant in Policy Services for the past nine months.

She says her main responsibility is keeping her co-workers from pulling their hair out.

Previous State Fund positions include Administrative Assistant in MIS, Program Assistant in Underwriting, Cashier in Accounting, and Administrative Clerk in Underwriting.

Chantal has a cat named Lucy (who is a handful) and enjoys playing pool, snowmobiling, and tubing at the lake.

New ICCW Rep

Denise Molley of the legal department was recently selected as the new representative to the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee for Women, ICCW.

ICCW addresses a variety of issues including employee benefits, training, family care, EEO issues, and potential legislation.

Shauna Foley and Jim Grisgby were previous members of ICCW.

If you have comments or suggestions, please contact Denise at 7771.

Profile makeups...

Systems Administration Division

Rick Weiss is the Database Administrator and has held the position for 1 year.

In his job, Rick monitors the performance and configuration of all State Fund Oracle database servers and has been working with the BIS development team on Oracle design issues.

Rick has previously worked as a Performance Engineer with Allied Signal Aerospace in Phoenix, AR.

He attended Arizona State University, majoring in Mechanical/Aerospace Engineering.

Rick has been married to Cora for "15 wonderful years" and has three active sons, John, 13, Scott, 10, and Brian 8. He enjoys all types of outdoor sports.

TEAMS *continued from page 1*

cure business we have lost.

The effects of our efforts will not be felt immediately. After many years of doing little to service the large accounts, we must improve negative perceptions that unquestionably exist regarding our ability to provide services that are commonly provided by our competitors. Creating cross-department teams will also help stabilize premium writings and expenses.

The training session was video taped and is available for anyone who wishes to learn about this critical strategic change. The tapes are available in the HR Department—contact Frank Graham.

Barry Reed, John McMahon, Tom Mitcham, and Bob Brunk discuss team issues.

Message from the President

We have begun the formation of our Cross-Department Teams.

These new teams will work to add more value to our services and retain key medium and large premium policyholders.

This is an exciting change from our current environment which does not differentiate between customers or recognize the needs of each individual customer.

State Fund employees will receive unique training, some of which has already occurred, on how to determine the critical needs of key customers and provide the services to meet those needs. Through this training, employees will also have the opportunity to learn more about other department functions and develop enhanced skills.

The teams will establish objectives and work together to achieve our Strategic Business Plan goals.

Cross-Department Teams are just another example of how the State Fund is changing its culture to provide improved customer service and greater opportunities for employees to learn and develop new skills.

I welcome your feedback and ideas on our new cross-department team focus and encourage you to zip or write me a note, if you have any suggestions. Thank you.

Donnelly Receives Governors Appreciation Award for Excellence in Performance

Each year in September all state agencies nominate then select from their nominees, 1 or 2 (depending on number of employees) recipients for the Governor's Appreciation Award for Excellence in Performance.

This year, the State Fund chose Fiscal Operations Officer Lynn Donnelly, as the recipient of the Award.

Lynn is an exceptional supervisor and encourages her department to reach beyond just "getting the job done." She finds efficient ways of increasing productivity, while maintaining the respect and dedication of her staff.

Lynn played a key role in the design of the State Fund's data processing systems, assists in creating customer friendly forms and implemented direct deposit for MCO providers. She has been instrumental in maintaining service within her department while staff levels decrease. Lynn is always cheerful and helpful even though her workload is demanding and stressful.

On Wednesday, Sept. 27—State Employee Recognition Day— Lynn will participate in an Awards Ceremony at the Capitol Rotunda. ***Congratulations Lynn!***

The State Fund will hold its Awards Ceremony on Thursday, Sept. 28, at 10 a.m. on first floor. Service pins will be presented and the Employee of the Year will be announced, as well as all of the nominees for the Governor's Award. Following the Ceremony, all employees are invited to room 303 for cake and punch.

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Letters to the Editor will be accepted from current State Fund employees and are to be submitted to the Editor no later than the last Monday of each month. The employee's name, section and department, and phone number must accompany the letter. Letters deemed inappropriate to the goals and objectives of the *Guardian* or the State Fund will be returned to the author with an explanation of denial.

Letters to the Editor do not reflect the policy or official positions of either the Board of Directors or the management of the State Fund.

Editor, Aidan Myhre, Director, Industry and Consumer Affairs. **Managing Editor and Layout**, Shawna Swanz, Public Information Specialist. Call 444-5982 with comments or suggested articles for the *Guardian*.

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Unsafe Office continued

Although the hazards were exaggerated in the Unsafe Office Exhibit, we hope that those who attended gained a better understanding of hazard assessment and will use the information to evaluate their own work stations.

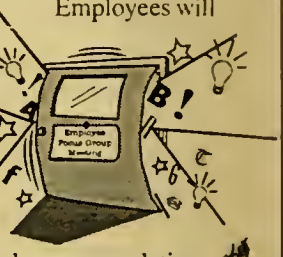
Employee Focus Group Update

The Employee Focus Group has been meeting every Friday to work through the issues identified by employees.

The issues primarily focus on employee moral, communication flow, managing change, and training.

The group has made exciting progress. Following an active brainstorming session, the group conducted a careful analysis of the most important and probable recommendations for changes.

A plan will be created by the focus group and presented to Carl Swanson at the end of this month. Employees will also have an opportunity to review the plan before it is finalized.



Watch the October *Guardian* for highlights of the groups final recommendations.

Employee of the Month

Congratulations Jay Phillips, Employee of the Month for August

When you come right down to it, Jay is a hard worker! She is a policy services unit supervisor and her main goal is to help her staff with whatever task is laid before them—whether it's Advance Premium or Limited Liability Companies—she is "in there" trying to learn all she can, so she can properly instruct staff.

She is a creative thinker, a leader, and is not afraid of change. Jay's policy services knowledge is very extensive; she is professional, and conducts herself as such. Jay has respect for her co-workers and is a team player.

She acknowledges staff's hard work and is willing to pitch in where ever she is needed. She has insight to get the job done and isn't afraid to do the work.

Jay has been with the State Fund for almost 12 years; 10 in her current position. She is married and likes to ride dirt bikes, water ski, and tube with Darcy and Chantal.